



### FAST FACTS:

- The goal of this campaign is to reduce tobacco use in California by promoting a social norm of not accepting tobacco.
- TEMC continues to target both adults and youths to counter pro-tobacco influences.
- A report on the TEMC found that the proportion of Californians who attempted to quit smoking for more than a day increased whenever the media campaign was in effect.

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# California's Tobacco Education Media Campaign

## Origin: Proposition 99

In 1988, California voters passed Proposition 99, a ballot initiative that called for adding a 25-cent tax on each pack of cigarettes sold. From the funds generated by this tax, 20% is earmarked for anti-tobacco education in schools and communities (The Health Education Account). In recent years, about 75% of this 20% supports the multifaceted statewide program of the Department of Health Services Tobacco Control Section. The major components of the program are

Local Lead Agencies (city/county health departments), Competitive Grantees (nonprofit community-based organizations), Evaluation, and the Tobacco Education Media Campaign (TEMC). This media campaign, in conjunction with the other program components, has the goal of reducing tobacco use in California by promoting a social norm of not accepting tobacco.

## Advertising

The TEMC utilizes hard-hitting paid advertising and public service announcements (television, radio, billboards, transit, and print) with thought provoking messages to effectively communicate the dangers of tobacco use, secondhand smoke, and the tobacco industry's manipulative marketing ploys. The TEMC continues to target both adults and youth, with a focus on countering pro-tobacco influences, reducing exposure to secondhand smoke, reducing the appeal and



availability of tobacco to youth, and supporting the Smokers' Helpline, which provides one-on-one counseling in multiple languages for smokers who want to quit.

To reach California's diverse communities and cultures, the campaign supplements the general market advertising with in-

language and culturally relevant advertising directed toward Hispanic/Latinos, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and African Americans.

## Industry Response

Sometimes, the best measure of a campaign's success is gauged by documenting the reaction of the "competition." Internal tobacco industry memos clearly demonstrate concern about the success of the TEMC. An April 1990 memo from a Tobacco Institute senior vice president offers strategies "to meet our goal of eliminating Prop 99 media money." The strategies included:

- Encourage the California legislature to intervene;
- Cooperate with minority, business and other groups in developing their opposition to the advertising program;
- Convince Health Services Director Kizer to pull or modify current advertisements; and

*continued*

- Encourage the Governor to intercede against the campaign.

The success of anti-industry ads prompted the tobacco industry's Tobacco Institute to recommend that all their actions be covert. "Our goal is to keep the advertisements—not the tobacco industry—at the center of the controversy. If the industry attempts to meet the Department of Health Services head on in the media, the controversy is likely to shift from the ads to the industry."

RJ Reynolds likewise mounted its own underground campaign to spirit funds away from the TEMC. A January 1991 memo demonstrates the company had a strategy that targeted "key legislators" for the purpose of shifting money away from the TEMC. Components of the strategy included the launching of a campaign to portray the industry as capable of acting "in a socially responsible manner, thereby reducing the need for

stringent State financed Prop 99 programs." The foundation sponsored for accomplishing this goal was the establishment of the "Helping Youth Say No" program, which taught that smoking was an "adult decision" (as opposed to a "bad decision").

***"The California campaign, and those like it, represents a very real threat to the industry in the intermediate-term." (emphasis theirs).***

—RJR Memo

The memo also evaluated the effectiveness of ads produced by the TEMC. Ads that attacked the industry, addressed health concerns, painted smoking as "anti-social," and tried to stop youth smoking were generally "well received." The memo went on to say, "California campaign enjoys high rate of awareness and appears to be having the intended

effect on smoking attitudes (smokers/non-smokers)."

The conclusion of the RJR memo clearly demonstrates the impacts of the TEMC: "The California campaign, and those like it, represents a very real threat to the industry in the intermediate-term." (emphasis theirs)

## Budget

From 1989 through 1999, California invested approximately \$161 million of Proposition 99 funds in the TEMC. In recent years, the annual funding level has been about \$25 million, less than 5 percent of what the tobacco industry spends. According to estimates based on the Federal Trade

Commission Report to Congress Pursuant to The Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act, the tobacco industry has been spending over \$500 million annually for advertising and promotions in California.

## Results

According to a study in the *American Journal of Public Health* (September 1995), a reduction in cigarette sales by 232 million packs, from the third quarter of 1990 through the fourth quarter of 1992, was a direct result of the anti-tobacco media campaign.<sup>1</sup> The effects of the TEMC occurred despite the tobacco industry's escalation of advertising and promotions in response to the state's program.

The TEMC has had a positive effect on boosting smoking cessation attempts, and it also has increased Californians' awareness of the danger of tobacco smoke to nonsmokers. A report by John Pierce of the University of California, San Diego, covering 1989-1993, showed that the proportion of Californians who attempted to quit smoking for more than a day increased whenever the media campaign was in effect.<sup>2</sup> During this same period, adults who saw the media campaign

advertisements were more likely than those adults who did not see the media campaign to believe that secondhand smoke is harmful to nonsmokers, especially children. They were also more likely to ask someone not to smoke.

An independent evaluation of California's tobacco control program, conducted during 1996 and 1997 by Gallup, noted many positive effects of the TEMC.<sup>3</sup> Some of these effects were:

- High percentages of adults and 10th-graders surveyed recalled seeing or hearing specific TV, radio, and outdoor advertisements, including two historic ads that had not aired for over a year prior to the survey.
- TEMC ads increased adults' and 10th-graders' awareness of the dangers of secondhand smoke and the likelihood

that they would ask another person not to smoke around them. (A 1997 California Department of Health Services study, which indicates 95 percent of California adults believe secondhand smoke harms babies and children, supports this finding.)

- Adults who remembered more ads emphasizing the manipulative practices of the tobacco industry were more likely to believe that tobacco advertising and promotions influence youth to smoke.

- Youth who remembered more ads emphasizing the manipulative practices of the tobacco industry were more likely to believe that:

- Tobacco companies try to get young people to start smoking by using advertisements that are attractive to young people
- Tobacco companies try to get people addicted to smoking
- Tobacco companies would not stop selling cigarettes if they knew for sure that smoking hurt people

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## References

<sup>1</sup> Hu T, Sung H, Keeler T: *Reducing Cigarette Consumption in California: Tobacco Taxes Versus an Anti-Smoking Media Campaign*. American Journal of Public Health, Sept 1995; 85(9):1218-1222.

<sup>2</sup> Pierce JP, Evans N, Farkas AJ, Cavin SW, Berry C, Kramer M, Kealey S, Rosbrook B, Choi W, Kaplan RM: *Tobacco Use in California: An Evaluation of the Tobacco Control Program, 1989-1993*. La Jolla, CA: University of California, San Diego; 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Independent Evaluation Consortium. *Final Report of the Independent Evaluation of the California Tobacco Control Prevention and Education Program: Wave 1 Data, 1996-1997*. Rockville, MD: The Gallup Organization, 1998.

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